

tion was to be paid to them, yet I have found one instance where the Rabbis urge the interpretation of dreams. For according to Rabbi Chisda a dream not interpreted is like a letter not read, [of no consequence, says Rashi, for all depends upon the interpretation]; if so, Joseph was guilty of deliberate murder. Rabbi Chisda further said: "Neither a good dream nor a bad dream is wholly realized"; again, "A bad dream is better than a good dream; for a bad dream is neutralized by the sadness it causes, and a good dream is realized by the joy it brings."²⁷

We see then that although some Rabbis regarded dreams as of no consequence, yet some,²⁸ on the other hand, were able to foretell future events²⁹ as well as ward off hardships that were to come upon them. Although dreams in general are made little of, yet people³⁰ from the earliest times³¹ to the present day have believed in them as something more than the result of a full stomach or a cherished thought.

DREAMS.

BY T. B. STORK.

APROPOS of Professor Freud's "Interpretation of Dreams," which for the last few years has called forth considerable discussion, I would like to call attention to a theory of dreams published some years ago, whether strictly new and original I know not, but which seems at least simpler and less open to the charge of being fantastic.

According to this view, dreams are what might be called blind perceptions; that is, they are the efforts of our perceptive faculty to form an intelligible perception with defective materials. An example will best illustrate the idea.

We are all familiar with the story of the dreamer who dreamed that he had enlisted in the army, was guilty of some grave offense for which he was condemned to death, and was just about to be

²⁷ *Berachoth*, 55a.

²⁸ Cf. Pausanias, IX, xxxix, 5f, where we are told that the oracles of Trophonius and Æsculapius were dream-oracles where the sick slept, seeking means of cure, and where those who desired to know future events went to obtain it through dreams.

²⁹ Xenophon, writing about the retreat of the 10,000, states that he constantly depended on dreams. Cf. his *Hipparch.*, I, 1; also *Cyneget.*, I, 1f.

³⁰ Hippocrates, I, 633, *De insomniis*; cf. also Artemidorus, *Oneir.*, passim.

³¹ *Iliad*, II, 322f.

shot. The sound of the guns of the execution awakened him and he heard the sound of a door slamming with a loud bang; this not only aroused him from his slumber, but was the active cause of his dream, which he had dreamed in the interval elapsing between the first sound of the slamming door and his actual awakening: of this the explanation is quite easy and satisfactory.

The auditory nerves of the slumberer had conveyed to his consciousness a loud sound; it had intruded, so to speak, on a consciousness empty of all other sensations, and the perceptive faculty working in an automatic way had endeavored to form a rational perception of the sound, but with no other material than the sensation of the sound itself. This was impossible. In order to form a rational perception of the sound and make it intelligible, it was absolutely essential to have other sensations, other material, to build up the perception, and in the absence of any real sensations, the perceptive faculty called upon memory and from its store of past sensations, drew the materials that were wanting, supplied guns as the source of the sound and accounted for the guns by the rest of the events of the enlistment, misbehavior, etc., these latter not being perhaps essential to the immediate perception of the sound, but required by the sensations or material, the guns etc., invented to make the perception of the sound possible. A rational perception of a sound all by itself is impossible for the mind, it cannot perceive in the philosophical sense a sound by itself with nothing but a sound, no sensation from any other organ of perception, accompanying it. Yet, on the other hand, there is a sensation of sound presented to consciousness, real, persistent, that will not be denied or set aside, and so the perceptive faculty must do something with it, must form an intelligible perception containing it, and so for want of any other material, it catches up from memory any odd or end that will help make it rational, much as a woman might take up from her work-table any piece of finery or stuff to complete a garment. It is a sudden, almost instantaneous operation that flashes through the consciousness during the short time between the slumberer's hearing the noise and his awakening to full consciousness.

Here undoubtedly is the source of one large class of dreams; that is, of dreams caused by some external irritation of the senses, and is it not quite likely, reasoning from analogy, that the dreams of a different class, those which are not directly traceable to any external irritation of the senses, may be caused by other less obvious internal irritations, obscure nerve-excitements transmitted by the bodily organs when not in a normal condition? There is a story

of a woman who had a dream that her husband was being executed; she awoke with a sensation of horror at the dreadful occurrence. Not long after she was taken with an attack of smallpox; it is reasonable to suppose that, some prognosticating symptom of the disease making itself felt in her sleeping consciousness and insisting upon being perceived, there occurred the resultant dream of her husband's peril.

Dr. Maudsley in his work on *Dreams* gives an instance of his own experience much to the same effect, viz., that he dreamed he was dissecting a subject when it suddenly revived; his horror and mortification were nothing more than the suffering from an intestinal disturbance which introduced into his consciousness such a sensation of pain that the perceptive faculty had to accept and perceive it to the above effect.

The theory will take a greater appearance of completeness if we contrast, for the moment, the blind perception of our dreaming with the true perception of our waking reality; the former built up by some single real sensation, to which other artificial sensations have been added from memory's store in order to make it possible to combine the real sensation into a rational perception; the latter a congeries of real sensations unified and rationalized into a true perception by the mysterious and hidden operation of the perceptive faculty—"apperception," Kant has called it, thus distinguishing it as the active work of the ego, from the more passive reception of sensations in consciousness. For example, I have a perception of myself walking along the street in a great city; innumerable sensations go to make up this perception, the absence of any one of which would render the perception defective, either wholly or partially unintelligible. Among the chief of these sensations—I will not presume to name them all, perhaps that is impossible—are: first, the sensation of sight; I see the street, the houses, the pavement, they all are sending sensations to my consciousness; there is a sensation of hearing; the sound of my footfalls on the pavement; many other sounds of less prominence announce the presence of surrounding objects; there is a sensation of feeling; I experience under my feet the resistance of the pavement to their touch; and further, there is another, less definite and not so easily recognized, a feeling of the muscular contraction taking place in my limbs as I exert them in the act of walking. Shut out any one of these and the perceptive faculty is at a loss to form its perception; it becomes puzzled. Assume that only the muscular contraction of the limbs renders a sensation in consciousness: I see and hear nothing, and

the perceptive faculty is compelled to make a perception out of this alone. What could it do? How could it render it intelligible? If I had already had a perception made out of real sensations and were merely closing my eyes and ears to everything transmitted through them, I could recall the sensations just experienced and by means of my memory complete a true and full perception of what was suggested by the single real sensation. The action would be very similar to that posited as taking place in dreams, with the difference that here I consciously recall and rehabilitate at the suggestion of the single sensation all the rest. Thus I get my perception, blind, it is true, in that with the exception of feeling, all the other sensations are merely invented, artificial or imaginary, yet nevertheless intelligible, a copy of the actual perception which by an act of conscious will I have made impossible by closing my eyes and ears to the other sensations of which it was composed.

MISCELLANEOUS.

REGARDING CHRISTIAN ORIGINS.

BY EDGAR A. JOSSELYN.

A number of interesting articles have appeared in *The Open Court* on the origin of Christianity, about which there seems to be a rapidly growing interest among students of the history of religion. So much new information has been recently published about the early centuries of our era, that we are obliged to revise our idea of them, and give more serious attention to the "Christ myth" claim. Your contributors, however, while advancing strong arguments against various theories, do not appear to give consideration to two very important phases in the question, the combination of politics and religion in the early Roman Empire, and the strong hold that the dramatic elements of the ancient Greek mysteries had upon the people. Other writers ignore the same points, especially the first. Both points strengthen the Christ myth theory.

At the beginning of the Christian era the Roman emperors were deified and an acceptance of this deification was forced upon the empire. Apparently a unified religion was sought, corresponding to the unified political world that had been achieved. There was not such entire tolerance as Gibbon represents. To those who would not accept the deification of the emperors there was intolerance. The Jews resisted. We know that Philo of Alexandria went to Rome in 40 A. D. to persuade the emperor Gaius to abstain from claiming divine honor of the Jews. A Jewish religious revolt arose that ultimately led to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A. D. As is usual with religious wars the offense was not so much a difference in belief as resistance to the estab-